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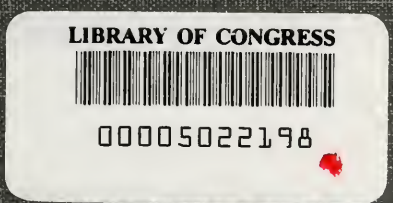

Linn Boyd

TO THE CITIZENS OF THE FIRST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT IN THE STATE OF KENTUCKY.

Gentlemen: The 27th Congress is about being closed; and the sum total of the great and glorious results which we were assured would *certainly* follow the triumph of the Whig party in the elections of 1840, are now spread before the country in the tangible form of legislative proceedings.

On the 4th of March, 1841, the Whigs found themselves in full possession of the reins of government. They had the President, Vice President, and a controlling majority in each branch of Congress; the *wild fury* of the *political whirlwind* of the preceding year having swept over the land with such *resistless force*, as to leave barely enough of the poor Democrats to tell the story of their unparalleled disasters. It is not my purpose *now* to speak at length of the extraordinary, not to say dishonorable, means employed by the Whigs in obtaining power. It will be remembered, however, that they were as profuse in preferring charges against Mr. Van Buren and his administration, as they were prolific in pledges of benefits to the country, if General Harrison should be elected. The fierce and vindictive manner in which Mr. Van Buren's Administration was traduced and hunted down, finds no parallel in the annals of party warfare. Charges of misrule and corruption were manufactured in such numbers, and promulgated with such rapidity, that in many instances time was not allowed to collect the proof with which to meet and refute them. The celebrated standing army, the Hooe case, the census law, the blood-hounds, and a thousand and one other ridiculous charges, were brought into requisition, and were designed *only* to serve the purposes of the hour, and then, together with all their other miserable appliances, to be thrown aside, and, if possible, remembered no more. I say remembered no more; for I fancy there are but few, very few, of any party—unless, indeed, it may be such as have lost all love for their country and its institutions, and all respect and esteem for the moral sentiment and religious feeling of the community—who would not rejoice (were it possible) to see the history of the scenes of 1840 blotted out forever. But this cannot be! On the contrary, having found a place in our country's history, they will remain a *foul blot* on its *bright pages*, which, whilst it marks the folly and dangers of the past, will, I trust, furnish a salutary lesson for the future.

In close affinity with the foregoing charges, was that of the extravagance, and more than princely splendor, with which it was said the President's house was furnished. Although this charge was met, and triumphantly refuted, at the threshold, still the boldness with which its truth was asserted and reaffirmed all over the country was such that the refutation of it went for nothing. Who that listened to this charge—always accompanied, as it was, with a grave and earnest

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dissertation upon the plain republican simplicity and economy which should characterize an American President—could have thought it possible that the Whigs, immediately after the election, could come into the halls of Congress, and ask additional furniture for the President's house? Yet such is the fact, as the journals will show; and the sum of $6,000 was actually appropriated for that purpose. Thus was it acknowledged in the face of the world, not only that the charge against Mr. Van Buren was in itself *false*, but that *their* professions of economy were equally *insincere* and *hypocritical;* else why this appropriation? The furniture used by Mr. Van Buren, and with which he was content, was still on hand. Yet, according to those plain economical gentlemen, the White House lacked $6,000 worth of furniture to render it fit for a log-cabin President (as they chose to call him) to live in. Next follows the kindred appropriation of $25,000 to Mrs. Harrison, for the services of her husband as President for one month *only*. This most extraordinary appropriation, made without the sanction of existing law, and in utter disregard of the Constitution of the country, had not even so much as the principle of common benevolence to recommend it; for it was known at the time that Mrs. Harrison was possessed of a most ample fortune. The salary of the President being fixed by law at $25,000 per annum, General Harrison was entitled for his one month's service to just $2,219 16, and no more. Being unable to find the slightest justification or excuse for this act, myself, I leave it to such defence as its friends may offer.

But again: notwithstanding it was known that, of the numerous office-holders under the Federal Government at Washington, a considerable majority were, and always had been, opposed to the Democratic administration—which is believed to have been the case throughout the Union—still the perpetual cry of *Proscription! proscription!* was kept up until thousands were made to believe that, by a regular, unprincipled, and most tyrannical system of rewards and punishments, Mr. Van Buren and his friends were attempting literally to force themselves into power for a second term. An immense army of office-holders, it was affirmed, were stationed all over the country, who, "*spaniel-like*," were *corruptly* using all the influence and power of office, and even the money of the Government itself, to promote the views and subserve the interests of their "*master at the White House*." The idea of removing men from office *for opinion's sake*, was most eloquently denounced as a gross abuse of executive power; and *reform* became a watchword of the party throughout the land. It will be remembered that such was the *holy horror* of the Whig leaders at what they chose to characterize as a dangerous interference in elections on the part of office-holders, that they actually proposed to pass a law to punish any man in office with instant *removal*, *fine*, and *imprisonment*, who should *dare* to *express* his *opinions* of *public men* and *public measures*. Such was the preaching of those gentlemen *before* the election: what has been their practice *since*? I have not learned the precise number of removals in the other departments of the Government, though they are known to have been numerous. But Mr. GRANGER, a leading Whig, and once their candidate for the Vice Presidency, made seventeen hundred removals in less than five months, whilst he occupied a place in the Whig cabinet as Postmaster General; within the month of June *alone*, he unceremoniously despatched five hundred and thirty-six Democrats; and now has the effrontery to tell us, in his place upon the floor in the House, that, but for his own

displacement, he would very soon have removed three thousand more. In the face of such facts, comment would be superfluous.

"*The appointment of members of Congress to office*," was another ground of perpetual and grievous complaint against General Jackson and Mr. Van Buren. Yet, the moment the Whigs got into power, as if in *utter contempt* of the solemn obligations imposed by their oft-repeated pledges to the country, they selected four of the six cabinet ministers of General Harrison fresh from the halls of Congress.

But, of the long catalogue of Whig complaints against the two last administrations, none was more universally and perseveringly persisted in than the charge of extravagance in the public expenditures. This allegation was always coupled with the cry and promise of *retrenchment* and *reform*, as the *certain* consequences of the election of General Harrison and his friends. They were elected—the Democrats turned out: and what has been the result? We have already noticed a few samples of Whig economy; but, for a more comprehensive view of the subject, I beg leave to refer you to the following table:

	Estimates.	Appropriations.	Expenditures.
1837 -	$22,651,442	$34,126,807	$31,610,003
1838 -	22,735,249	33,138,371	31,544,396
1839 -	–	23,862,560	25,443,716
1840 -	18,280,600	21,658,872	22,389,356

This table shows that, during Mr. Van Buren's administration, the expenditures were brought down (speaking in round numbers) from thirty-one millions in 1837, to twenty-two millions in 1840; and no one in the least acquainted with the policy of that administration can doubt that these reductions would have continued, if the management of our finances had not been transferred to other hands. The unusual and extraordinary burdens thrown upon a good portion of General Jackson's and the first two years of Mr. Van Buren's administration, on account of the Florida and Creek wars, building new custom and other houses, revolutionary debt of the State of Connecticut, protection to the Northeastern frontier, removing Indians to their new homes west of the Mississippi, &c., which, in 1838, alone amounted to upwards of $7,000,000, were known to be rapidly passing away; and, in view of this, Mr. Van Buren and his friends confidently calculated on being able to reduce the expenses of Government to $18,000,000, or less, per annum. How stands the account since the Whigs have had control of the finances? It must be borne in mind that estimates and appropriations for the year 1841 were made by the Democrats, just before they went out of office, and were as follows: estimates $17,688,736, and Congress appropriated for ordinary expenses $19,708,-996 62; and, at the earnest solicitation of the Whigs, and to avoid the necessity of a called session, also gave power to issue treasury notes amounting to $5,431,421 17—thus giving over twenty-five millions for the service of that year.

The Whigs were not content with that sum, as will be seen from the fact, that, upon meeting at the extra session, they made new and additional appropriations, to the amount of $5,043,705 02. Thus swelling the appropriations for 1841 to thirty instead of twenty-five millions, as proposed by their Democratic predecessors. The difference between Whig and Democratic economy is here seen at a glance. And it may be set down as one item in the long list of blessings promised by the former, that they have cost the

good people of this country, in the first year of their rule, the modest sum of $5,043,705 02 more than the Democrats proposed, or would have expended, had they been permitted to remain in power. Passing to the year 1842, we find the expenditures were $23,837,805 61—showing an increase over Mr. Van Buren's last year of one million and a half; and this, too, after the treasury had been relieved from nearly all the extraordinary expenses growing out of the Florida war, as well as the other causes to which I have alluded. Bearing in mind the patriotic strains with which the Whigs everywhere denounced what they were pleased to call wasteful extravagance on the part of their opponents, who could have dreamed of such a showing as this? Let it not be said that Mr. Tyler did it. The President is responsible for what he may recommend, and for the faithful application of the sums appropriated. But it is the Congress that "holds the purse strings of the nation." In the language of the Constitution, "*no money shall be drawn from the treasury but in consequence of, appropriations made by law.*" With the Whig majority in Congress, then, rests the responsibility; and it would be vain for them to attempt to shift it off upon others.

But our proof relative to the *boasted economy* and *financial skill* of the Whigs does not stop here. I invite your particular attention to the following tables, showing the precise state of the debt charged by them to have been left upon the country by Mr. Van Buren's administration:

1*st. Amount of the public debt on the* 4*th March*, 1841.

Old funded and unfunded debt—		
Funded debt, interest and principal		$296,642 05
Unfunded debt (old)—treasury notes	$4,596 20	
Mississippi stock	4,320 09	
Registered debt	26,622 44	
		35,538 73
Debts of the corporate cities of the District of Columbia assumed by the United States		1,500,000 00
Treasury notes		5,648,512 40
		$7,480,693 18

2*d. Statement of the public debt on the* 13*th February*, 1843.

Old funded and unfunded debt—		
Funded debt, interest and principal		$288,306 40
Unfunded debt (old)—treasury notes	$4,317 44	
Mississippi stock	4,320 09	
Registered debt	26,622 44	
		35,259 97
Debts of the corporate cities of the District of Columbia assumed by the United States		1,380,000 00
Treasury notes		11,711,210 17
Loans of 1841 and 1842		13,974,445 11
		$27,389,221 65

T. L. SMITH, *Register.*

How stand their own records? What do they prove? 1st. They prove that this debt, inherited, as they say, from Mr. Van Buren, was only $5,653,108 60. The funded debt, and, indeed, all the items in this table, except the treasury notes, had come down *as old debts* from preceding administrations, and are not chargeable to Mr. Van Buren. Whenever, then, you hear it as a Whig apology for their extravagance and high taxes, that they were necessary to enable them to pay off Mr. Van Buren's debts, point them to this table, and fearlessly challenge every Whig in America to show that it was one dollar more than $5,653,108 60. But did they pay off even this debt, after they came into power? No; on the contrary, instead of diminishing, they have augmented it to an alarming amount. The second table, as above, shows that, on the 13th of February, 1843, they had increased the debt over twenty millions in two years. Is this the economy of which we heard so much during the presidential canvass of 1840? What excuse can the Whig party render to the people for such a state of things as is here presented? The extra session was convened (as they said) for the express purpose of paying off the outstanding debt of Mr. Van Buren's administration, and to provide a sufficient revenue for the wants of the Government. Then, why were those objects not accomplished? How does it happen that those gentlemen, after having full control of the Government for two whole years, are now about to leave it in a condition so much worse than they found it? A proper solution of these questions would clearly demonstrate the whole financial policy of the Whigs to be radically defective, and, if persisted in, must inevitably lead to the most disastrous consequences. But what is this policy, as developed by their acts during the present Congress? We have already seen that the economy they preached with such impassioned fervor *before*, was forgotten and repudiated *after* they got into power; and that relief to an exhausted treasury, by means of a reduction of expenses, has formed no part of *their system*. With them, a high protective tariff was a favorite measure; and, in their great eagerness to grasp that object, they seem to have entirely overlooked, or wilfully trampled under foot, the *interest* of the *Government*, as well as *the people*. That this is true, so far as the Government is concerned, is fully verified by the fact—that, instead of providing relief to an exhausted treasury, by fostering with care the means on hand, and increasing those means by the imposition of suitable taxes, (as every prudent man will say it was their duty to have done,) they went off full chase in pursuit of their great idea of a protective tariff; and, as a necessary prerequisite to the complete consummation of this grand object, their first step was to distribute the land fund among the several States. This fund, which, under a judicious management of the land sales, may be estimated at about $3,000,000 per annum, constituted a part of the regular annual revenues of this Government; and, to that extent, lessened the burdens of Federal taxation upon the people. To say nothing of the total want of constitutional authority to distribute this fund, let me ask, Was it expedient? Remember the condition of the treasury—its embarrassments and indebtedness; and, under such circumstances, can any prudent man justify the policy? It will not be pretended that it could, in any possible contingency, operate as a measure of relief to the Government; nor can it be regarded as such to the people, who, after all, must, in some form or other, pay the expenses of Government, both State and Federal. Why, then, this robbery of the

national treasury? The answer is plain. It was done, as all must see, to make room for the high protective tariff which followed. By squandering this land fund, they furnished an excuse for the imposition of duties to that extent higher than would otherwise have been necessary in supplying the Government with revenue. In favor of their late exorbitant tariff, the Whigs, by this contrivance, were enabled to plead a *necessity* which they had themselves created. This distribution, then, is in truth a tariff measure in disguise. That such is its practical operation, none can deny; and that it was so intended by its authors, who can doubt?

But, as a further test of the financial skill of the Whigs, let us examine for a moment the effect of their late tariff upon the revenue. Let it be recollected that (being in a majority) they brought forward and passed just such a tariff as they said would be sufficient to supply the Government with all necessary revenue. In the debates on this subject, the Democrats contended that this tariff was a measure which, whilst it afforded *bounties* to the *manufacturer* on the one hand, would *diminish the revenue* on the other. Let us see who was right in this important matter. By reference to House document No. 244, page 57, it will be seen that the receipts from customs for 1840 were $13,499,502; for 1841, they were $14,487,216; and, as appears, by reference to House document No. 17, (Secretary of the Treasury's report,) the receipts for the first three quarters of 1842 were $14,260,830 30. Here we have exhibited a regular increase of revenue, under a system of low and declining duties, as provided by the compromise act of 1833, down to August, 1842, when the present high tariff commenced its operation. And what has been the result? By another letter from the Secretary of the Treasury, (House document No. 70,) it is shown that the receipts from customs, under the new tariff, for the last quarter of 1842, were $2,573,436 76; and the largest amount estimated by him, for the whole of the present year, is $13,000,000. The only inference which can be drawn from these facts is, that a protective tariff and a tariff for revenue are wholly different *from*, and, in a great degree, inconsistent *with*, each other. And, in adjusting this question, the Whigs, in their zeal for protection, entirely disregarded the question of revenue.

How this measure, which, in addition to the tax it imposes for the benefit of the Government, levies a much greater contribution for the benefit of the manufacturer, can be tortured into a system of relief to the people, I am totally at a loss to conceive. That, on the contrary, *it is* one of those ingenious contrivances by which the few seek to plunder the many, must be apparent to all who take the trouble to examine its practical operation.

But if the Whigs were unsuccessful in raising a sufficient revenue, they have been equally unfortunate in the way of providing a suitable system for its collection and safekeeping. When they took possession of the Government, they found the independent treasury in full and successful operation. That measure—to say nothing of its other salutary provisions—*certainly* did throw around the public treasure more efficient and substantial safeguards than any ever adopted since the foundation of the Government. But it was an antagonist measure to their favorite credit system. It made no provision whereby the bankers and stockjobbers of the country could enjoy the use of the public moneys to trade and speculate upon. Hence it was peculiarly obnoxious to the Whigs, who, with fierce impatience, swept it from the statute book; leaving nothing, or next to nothing, in the shape of law, as a substitute for it.

Thus the safekeeping of the vast annual revenue of the Government has been placed at the *discretion* of the President. Where or how it is to be kept, is for him to determine.

After so much *frenzied railing* against *executive patronage* and *power*—the union of the purse and the sword in the hands of one man—who could have supposed it possible that the Whigs, having the power, would have suffered such a state of things to exist for a single day? Yet, at the end of two years of almost perpetual legislation, these gentlemen are about to go home, leaving the purse of the nation in the hands of John Tyler, who, they say, is not only weak and incompetent, but wholly destitute of political or moral integrity.

To remedy this evil, the majority passed two Federal bank charters, in each of which they provided that the national treasure should go into the holy keeping of the President, Directors, & Co., of the proposed bank. Thus, in effect, making the bank the *treasury*, and the *bankers* the *treasurers* of the Government. These propositions were met and defeated by the veto; and here the efforts of the Whig Congress to provide a fiscal agent for the Government ended. The President, on his part, proposed a national exchequer, based on the revenues of the Government, with power to establish branches in the several States, to receive individual deposites of money, to issue paper on the credit of the Government, to buy and sell bills of exchange, &c. This measure, I am happy to say, met with no favor from either party. Hence the whole question is referred to the people, who will determine for themselves whether they will adopt a bank, the sub treasury, or some other scheme, as an agent for the collection, safekeeping, and disbursement of the Government revenues.

But the bank was proposed as a measure of relief to the people. As a sample of some of the blessings to be expected from it, allow me to offer the following extract:

"What banks cost the people.—Notwithstanding all that has been said and written upon the subject of the credit and banking systems, few persons are actually aware of the vast amount which the people of the United States pay to the banks in the shape of interest *alone*. The United States Treasury reports enable us to make up the following table, exhibiting the whole number of banking institutions in each of five disastrous years, and their aggregate amount of loans and circulation. It is a brief but comprehensive table, worthy of careful study and perpetual remembrance:

	Banks.	Loans.	Circulation.
In the year 1836 - - -	713	$457,506,080	$140,301,038
1837 - - -	788	525,115,702	149,185,890
1838 - - -	829	485,631,687	116,138,910
1839 - - -	840	392,278,015	135,170,995
1840 - - -	901	462,896,523	106,968,572
		2,423,428,007	
At an interest of - - -		6	per cent.
		$145,405,680 42	

"One hundred and forty-five million four hundred and five thousand six hundred and eighty dollars and forty-two cents, paid in the shape of interest to the banks of the United States in the space of five years!!!

"Who can wender, after knowing the above facts, that the community has been laboring under embarrassment! And who is there so stupid, or so headstrong and perverse, that does not wish, in the fulness of his heart, that the industry and labor which discharged the above debt to the banks, had been devoted to bringing into the country the same grand sum of gold and silver, instead of worthless, exploded, fraudulent bank paper?"—*Ohio Patriot.*

But, in the catalogue of relief measures, the bankrupt law stands too conspicuous to be overlooked, and cannot have failed to command the earnest consideration of all men of all parties. That it has had the effect of relieving many unfortunate and worthy persons from a state of hopeless and irretrievable indebtedness, I am free to allow. But I think it must, at the same time, be admitted that it does more to weaken the sacred obligation of contracts, offers stronger inducements to frauds and perjuries, and thus infuses a more deadly moral poison throughout the land, than any law ever passed by Congress. Such a law, I presume, can have but few advocates.

That there may be no misapprehension as to whom the country is indebted for this measure, I beg leave to say that it passed the Senate by a vote of 26 to 23—but four Democrats voting for it. It passed the House by a vote of 111 to 105—two Democrats *only* voting for it. For myself, I not only voted against it from the beginning, but, by reference to the journal, it will be seen that it was upon my motion a bill was gotten up to repeal it, before the time fixed for it to go into operation; which bill passed the House by a majority of 28 votes, but was defeated in the Senate by *one* vote.

Notwithstanding the evidences of popular opinion in Kentucky against this law, as shown by the action of her Legislature, and otherwise, it is a remarkable fact that Mr. Clay was among the number who voted against its repeal. If he had voted differently, we should have been saved whatever of mischief it has inflicted on the country.

The repeal of the sub treasury—the establishment of a national bank—the distribution of the land fund—a protective tariff—and this bankrupt law—constitute a system of measures, by means of which general relief was to be afforded to the Government and the people. We have had the benefit of all these measures, in whole or in part, except the bank; and where are the evidences of that glorious prosperity so confidently predicted by the Whigs, and so fondly hoped for by the people? Let a bankrupt treasury—the depressed and crippled condition of trade and commerce—the low prices of labor and produce—and the deep and widespread pecuniary sufferings of the whole country—answer the question.

If I am asked for a remedy for these evils, my reply is, that *rigid economy*, *hard money*, *and low taxes*, with the energy and industry of our people, constitute the *most*, if not the *only*, substantial relief which can be applied.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

LYNN BOYD.

WASHINGTON, *February* 22, 1843.

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